

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-25

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DRAFTED BY EA/TB:GBROBERTS:CB

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O 180348Z MAY 75

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 115940

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, TH, US

SUBJECT: DELIVERY OF THAI PROTEST NOTE OVER MAYAGUEZ
INCIDENT

1. THAI AMBASSADOR ANAN CALLED ON THE SECRETARY MAY 17 TO DELIVER A COPY OF THE PROTEST NOTE OVER THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN DELIVERED IN BANGKOK (BANGKOK 8995). IN ANSWER TO THE SECRETARY'S QUESTION, ANAN SAID THAT HE WOULD BE GOING BACK TO BANGKOK FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD.

2. AFTER READING THE NOTE, THE SECRETARY SAID THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED THE US VIEW IN HIS MAY 16 PRESS CONFERENCE. HE SAID THAT HE APPRECIATED THAILAND'S FRIENDSHIP AND COURAGE AND SAID THAT WE WANTED TO PRESERVE THAT FRIENDSHIP. WE WOULD ADJUST IF THAILAND WISHED TO REEXAMINE OUR RELATIONS BUT WE DID NOT RECOMMEND ANY CHANGES AND DID NOT THINK THAT THEY WOULD BE IN THAILAND'S INTEREST. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT WE WERE AWARE THAT THAILAND FACED A NEW SITUATION, BUT A WEAKENING OF THE
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US POSITION IN THAILAND WOULD WEAKEN THE THAI BARGAINING

POSITION. WHAT HAD HAPPENED THIS WEEK WAS IN THAILAND'S INTEREST, THOUGH WE KNEW THE RTG COULD NOT ACCEPT THE PROCEDURES. WE WERE PREPARED TO PUT THE INCIDENT BEHIND US

AND BELIEVED IT TO BE THE RESULT OF UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES.

3. THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT PUBLIC OPINION IN THE UNITED STATES COULD GET OUT OF CONTROL AND THAILAND COULD LOSE SUPPORT. NEVERTHELESS, WE UNDERSTOOD THE SITUATION THAILAND FACED. FIVE YEARS AGO, THE SECRETARY SAID, IF WE HAD DONE WHAT WE DID THE THAI WOULD HAVE APPLAUDED. WE WERE AWARE THAT THAILAND FACED A NEW SITUATION AND WE WANTED TO GIVE THAILAND AS MUCH SUPPORT AS IT COULD HANDLE.

4. ANAN SAID THAT HE AGREED WITH THE SECRETARY THAT THAILAND HAD NO OBJECTION TO THE RESULTS OF OUR OPERATION TO FREE THE MAYAGUEZ BUT DID OBJECT TO THE PROCEDURES. THE SECRETARY COMMENTED THAT IF THE US HAD ASKED THAILAND'S PERMISSION FOR WHAT HAD BEEN DONE "YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN WORSE OFF."

5. ANAN SAID THAT PRIME MINISTER KHUKRIT HAD BEEN PARTICULARLY UPSET AT THE PRESS LEAKS ATTRIBUTED TO WASHINGTON SOURCES THAT THE THAI GOVERNMENT DID NOT REALLY MEAN IT WHEN OBJECTIONS HAD BEEN MADE TO THE MAYAGUEZ INCIDENT. THE SECRETARY SAID HE KNEW THAT ANY PRIVATE FEELINGS OF SATISFACTION OVER THE INCIDENT ON THE PART OF THAI OFFICIALS DID NOT CONSTITUTE AN OFFICIAL POSITION. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE THAI POSITION. '

6. REFERRING TO THE SECRETARY'S COMMENT THAT FIVE YEARS AGO THAILAND WOULD HAVE APPLAUDED THE US ACTION, ANAN SAID THAT NOT ONLY HAD THE INTERNATIONAL SITUATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA CHANGED BUT THAT THAILAND'S INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION HAD ALSO CHANGED. THERE WAS NOT SUFFICIENT APPRECIATION IN THE US OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CURRENT CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT AND THE FORMER MILITARY REGIME. THE SECRETARY SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE DISTINCTION AND HIS COMMENT WAS NOT BASED UPON THE CONFIDENTIAL

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DIFFERENCE IN GOVERNMENTS BUT ON THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES. HE SAID HE HOPED ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB WOULD HAVE GOOD TALKS ON HIS FORTHCOMING VISIT TO BANGKOK AND EMPHASIZED THAT THE US WANTED TO BE HELPFUL. THE UNITED STATES WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THAILAND.

7. ANAN SAID THAT HIS GOVERNMENT ALSO WANTED GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. SOME ASPECTS OF THOSE

RELATIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE REVIEWED, BUT THAILAND WANTED

THE OVERALL RELATIONSHIP TO BE A GOOD ONE. ANAN SAID THAT WHILE HE WAS IN BANGKOK HE WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE REVIEW PROCESS.

8. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD NO REASON TO THROW AWAY ANY OF ITS FRIENDS AND WOULD GIVE THAILAND SUPPORT. WE MEANT TO MAINTAIN OUR TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP WITH THAILAND. THE SECRETARY SAID HE WAS SORRY TO HAVE HAD TO MEET WITH ANAN UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES BUT ASKED HIM TO TELL HIS GOVERNMENT TO KEEP STEADY. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT EXCESS FLEXIBILITY DID NOT WORK ON NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE COMMUNISTS, PARTICULARLY WITH THE NORTH VIETNAMESE, AS HE KNEW FROM HIS OWN EXPERIENCE.

9. FYI: DEPARTMENT IS PREPARING A RESPONSE TO THE THAI NOTE WHICH WILL BE FORWARDED TO THE EMBASSY FOR TRANSMITTAL. KISSINGER

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